

Amendments to the Claims:

This listing of claims will replace all prior versions, and listings, of claims in the application:

Listing of Claims:

1. (Currently Amended) A method for allocating a recommended route resource in a digital network, the method comprising:
 - using a network planning tool prior to a time of operation of the digital network to define a recommended route;
 - determining when a route change is needed at a time of operation of the digital network; and
 - allocating the recommended route at the time of operation of the digital network.
2. (Canceled)
3. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a plurality of recommended routes is defined.
4. (Original) The method of claim 3, further comprising
 - defining a priority order of the plurality of recommended routes; and
 - allocating the plurality of recommended routes at least in part according to the priority order.
5. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein a definition of the recommended route includes one or more of the following: source node, destination node, service type, service granularity, maximum delay, protection type.

6. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 5, wherein a definition of the recommended route includes routing information.

7. (Original) The method of claim 6, wherein the routing information includes equipment needs.

8. (Original) The method of claim 7, wherein the routing information indicates whether a route uses a switching matrix.

9. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending the definition of a recommended route to a network management system.

10. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending the definition of a recommended route to an Element Management System.

11. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending the definition of a recommended route to a Craft Terminal.

12. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising sending the definition of a recommended route to a control plane.

13. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, wherein the route includes a description of a characteristic of an optical network.

14. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving information generated at a time of deployment of the digital network;
and
using the received information to modify the definition of a recommended route.

15. (Previously Presented) The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving information generated at a time of operation of the digital network; and using the received information to modify the definition of a recommended route.

16 - 20. (Canceled)

21. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for allocating a recommended route resource in a digital network, the apparatus comprising:

a processor;

a computer-readable storage medium including instructions executable by the processor comprising:

one or more instructions for using a network planning tool prior to a time of operation of the digital network to define a recommended route;

one or more instructions for determining when a route change is needed at a time of operation of the digital network; and

one or more instructions for allocating the recommended route at the time of operation of the digital network.

22. (Currently Amended) A computer-readable storage medium including instructions executable by a processor, for allocating a recommended route resource in a digital network, the computer-readable storage medium including instructions which, when executed by a processor, cause the processor to perform the following comprising:

~~one or more instructions for~~ using a network planning tool prior to a time of operation of the digital network to define a recommended route;

~~one or more instructions for~~ determining when a route change is needed at a time of operation of the digital network; and

~~one or more instructions for~~ allocating the recommended route at the time of operation of the digital network.

23. (Canceled)

24. (Currently Amended) An apparatus for allocating a recommended route resource in a digital network, the apparatus comprising:
means for using a network planning tool prior to a time of operation of the digital network to define a recommended route;
means for determining when a route change is needed at a time of operation of the digital network; and
means for allocating the recommended route at the time of operation of the digital network.

25. (Canceled)

26. (Previously Presented) The apparatus of claim 24, wherein a plurality of recommended routes is defined.

27. (Original) The apparatus of claim 26, further comprising
means for defining a priority order of the plurality of recommended routes; and
means for allocating the plurality of recommended routes at least in part according to the priority order.